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SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Lectures to Business Men

BY

HENRY JONES
Esq.

SECOND EDITION

GLASGOW
JAMES MACLEHOSE AND SONS
PUBLISHERS TO THE UNIVERSITY

1906



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Social Responsibilities

Lectures to Business Men

BY

HENRY JONES

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MORAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

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PREFACE

THESE lectures were delivered at the invitation of the Scottish Christian Social Union, and addressed primarily to the business men of Glasgow. Their object is to deepen the sense of social responsibility amongst such men, as the most secure and practical means of raising the level of social life, and of dealing wisely and effectively with its very difficult problems.

In the first lecture, which is Introductory, some indications are given of the fact that the affairs of the City and of the State are treated in a more frivolous way than those of a private business ; and it is assumed that the reason for this lies in the fact that many men are not aware how directly and vitally their well-being depends upon Society, and that of Society upon them. The second and the third lectures are intended to give a popular exposition of the intimacy of the relations of Man and Society, and of the many and deep obligations of social service which spring therefrom. In the last

lecture some indications are given of the means that must be employed in order to make this service ultimately effective in a broad and permanent way.

If I could deem this little book worthy of the cause it would serve, I should dedicate it to my fellow-citizens.

HENRY JONES.

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW,
5th December, 1905.

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Social Responsibilities

LECTURE I

PRESENT CONDITIONS

Chairman: I UNDERTAKE this course of Lectures with
Lord Provost much diffidence ; it is quite unlike anything
Bilsland. that I have ever attempted before. If anyone were to question my right to speak on such a theme and at such an hour, and to address myself specially to the business men of Glasgow, I should find it somewhat difficult to give an answer.

But one thing I can say, my Lord Provost : it is not because I think that the business men of Glasgow are indifferent to the public welfare, or callous towards the social good. I have been in Glasgow for nearly twenty years as student and teacher, and have learned something of the number and variety of the social undertakings, and of the depth and volume of the stream of benevolence that flows unbroken through the years in this city. I have been still more impressed by the care, the time, the conscientious labour that are constantly being devoted in unobtrusive ways by faithful and unselfish men to the just and economical management

of our charitable and other public institutions. There is a great mass of good social work carried on daily in Glasgow, for which the main reward is just the doing it; and much of this work is done by its business men.

Now, social reformers do not often dwell upon this aspect of the truth. They are, as a rule, more impressed with the evils of Society than with the good which keeps these evils in check. The poverty, the thoughtlessness, the unhappiness, the listless helplessness of the many thousands of their fellow-citizens arrest their attention and move their feelings more readily than do the quiet, unobtrusive, every-day virtues which, after all, characterize the lives of the great multitude of well-doing men and women. Hence the social prophets are generally too denunciatory in their methods, and, not infrequently, have very little hope for the future except in some radical change of our laws and institutions. They desire some new beginning for our social life under new conditions, or even upon some entirely new basis. Nor can it be said that they are in every sense wrong. There is no doubt that many of our laws and institutions require to be changed. We desire with great unanimity many reforms which we know not how to bring about. So that in many respects the legislative enactments lag behind the moral convictions and purposes of the times. And these are never quite secure until they are embodied in institutions and fixed laws.

Nevertheless, I think our social purposes would, on the whole, be more sane if there existed a clearer consciousness of the value of our laws and institutions just as they stand; and that social reform would move more steadily if we were more fully resolved to make the best

of them. Without in the least denying the need for many changes, being certain, rather, that a more fully moralized social life would of itself bring many changes, I still believe that what is most to be desired is a larger volume of good work on present lines, and the injection of a higher meaning into our present ways. This, at any rate, is the aspect of reform to which I shall venture to call your attention.

Now, a clearer consciousness of the good that is already in the world, is, I believe, the same thing as a clearer understanding of the *meaning* of the social world and of the great principles which bind its structure together. For to understand an object is to see through its defects to the positive qualities that constitute it; and nothing is ever made up of its shortcomings. Hence, we must place our faith in evolution rather than in revolution. Any good that can be done in the future must first of all be firmly fixed in the good at present working in the world. To reform society we must recognize the need and form a clear estimate of the possibility of making much more of the forces of social welfare already at work amongst us.

How, then, is this to be accomplished? I am tempted to offer a very simple answer, in which we shall all agree: It is by bringing more men, more good men, to share in the great enterprize of improving our social life. The workers in this field, numerous as they are, are all too few. The obligations of citizenship are not felt so widely nor so deeply as they ought to be.

In order that we may realize this fact, I must discuss shortly the present condition of matters, and

endeavour to put quite plainly the results of my own observation. If in any respect they are partial or incorrect, your wider experience of the practical affairs of the city will enable you to modify them. Is it not true that, many as are the workers in the various departments of the social field, their number is not great in comparison with the whole number of good men in the city? If you look through the lists of subscribers and donors to the many good causes that exist in Glasgow, do you not find very much the same names? If you are engaged on committees or occupied in benevolent social enterprizes do you not very generally meet with the same men and women? Are there sound reasons for denying that there are many thousands of men in this city whose interest in civic matters is at least not palpable? Or are we not forced to the conclusion that the circle of those who are generous of their time and of their means for public causes is comparatively narrow?

Again, if we turn from these private institutions to those civic matters which concern the welfare of the city as a whole, and which are gathered in the hands of our public representatives on the Town Council, is it not all too clear that purposeful, serious, persistent interest in them is far less general than it ought to be? The pulse of social life beats low in the breast of many a man who, in his private dealings with his fellow-men, is upright, honourable, just, and generous. I cannot account for the fact that social evils which are so patent and so universally deplored continue to exist among us, and that the movement towards a better life is so slow, except by saying that we have

not learnt to mass together the will for good which undoubtedly exists amongst us, or to set free the latent moral forces and direct them towards social ends.

The ordinary citizen does not always seek to pay his social debts. And the main reason, I believe, is that he is not aware of the extent of his borrowing. He considers that if he provides for his own and his family's needs, if he pays his taxes, and if he contributes some modicum of his means to his church or to some of the educational or charitable institutions of his city, he can cry quits with his social world, and go about conscience free. Of earnest care, of loving thought for that social world he shows much too little. He will scarcely trouble to cast his vote in the elections; if he does cast his vote, he is apt to do so on some petty, passing issue, as on a matter not worth much reflection. If the affairs of the city or the education of its children fall into wrong hands—if men of narrow minds, and even of doubtful integrity, gather up the reins of government, he only stands aloof the more, as from some low concern which does not much affect him. He does not desire the doubtful honours of civic authority; he believes he is a better man than many of those who seek them; and their mistakes justify him the more in his own sight for standing apart from the unseemly scramble.

Is this an exaggerated account of the state of mind towards the city and its civic institutions of many men who are honourable in business, kindly, generous, and neighbourly in all the relations of their private life? I think not. I believe you will acknowledge the facts.

I am not even sure but that some of you may feel inclined to defend them.

The matter is one we may contemplate with some care; for the destiny of the city—nay, we can take a wider survey and say that the welfare of the State as a whole—depends in very great measure on the possibility of directing the more serious and active interest of just these good men upon its affairs. This is particularly desirable in the case of the good business men, whose life is directly practical. For I do not think that the business spirit rules sufficiently widely in the conduct of our civic and imperial affairs—not that we can lay all the blame upon the individuals who are actually engaged on these affairs. Under present circumstances, they cannot easily do better. It is not possible entirely to prevent the inferior members of any public assembly from pitching the key of its discussions. And, above all, these men are *our* representatives—the victims, as well as the exponents of social forces which they cannot control. There is no way of raising the level of our representatives except by raising the level of public life as a whole. And it cannot be denied that, with all the defects they may have, they sacrifice much more time and devote more care and thought to public affairs than most of the men who criticize them.

But after making every allowance of this kind, I believe the business men of this city would agree that the affairs of the city (and of the empire, too, for that matter) are conducted in a spirit, and in a manner which, were they applied to the affairs of a private company, would be called frivolous and dangerous. For instance, either through your influence, or more

probably through not exercising your influence, there are men sitting on the City Council whom you would not make your partners in business, or whom the shareholders in a great company would endeavour with much earnestness to remove from the directorate on the first opportunity. Nor do I think that the practical men in this city would approve altogether of the way in which the business is conducted. Most of the best work of the City Council is of course done in Committees, whose labours the public does not see. And besides, the public cares more, or at least is more fully informed about, the "scenes" on the Town Council than about its solid business. But allowing again for these facts, I may say that, in our local and imperial Parliament, there is much more mere oratory, more dialectical defeats and triumphs not in the least relevant to the practical business of governing well, than you would be able to approve on any private Board of Directors with less than a tithe of the city's affairs to manage.

In fact, a private concern whose reports read week by week like the discussions in our Town Council would not be considered safe by its shareholders. And nothing, my Lord Provost, proves so clearly the toughness of the social fibre as the fact that it can stand the strain of our treatment of it. We grumble at the treatment, but we do not earnestly strive to change it. An impartial spectator, looking at our ways, would conclude that, in comparison with our more private affairs, those of the city and the empire concern our welfare in a remote and superficial way. We are relatively very indifferent to them ; and we are indifferent

just because we are ignorant, and our social thinking is full of fallacies.

We are not aware of the magnitude and worth of our social inheritance. We have never realized either the difficulty of the process by which our inheritance has been gained, or the conditions under which alone it can be maintained in its integrity. It is not seen that it is the product of the efforts of countless generations of men, slowly constructing out of the chaos of ill-regulated desires and colliding purposes both the stable institutions of civilization and the temperament which respects them. Not knowing either the nature or the worth of our inheritance, not realizing either the frailty or the strength of the forces which bind the social structure together into the most complicated and delicate of all the products of human nature, we do not care for it as for our most precious possession, nor strive to increase its worth, establishing it ever more firmly on the broad basis of a more enlightened social consciousness. We take Society as a matter of course, and its laws as laws of nature. We enjoy its benefits as we enjoy the sunshine and the air. The very stability of our institutions and steadfastness of our social ways give them the appearance of standing of themselves, and of needing neither our care nor our help.

LECTURE II

MAN DEPENDS ON SOCIETY

Chairman: I VENTURED to say in this place last week
The Rev. P. M'Adam Muir, D.D. that the obligations of civic life sit all too lightly on the minds of many men, otherwise blameless and estimable. I even held these men to be, in a considerable degree, responsible for defects in the conduct of public business both in the imperial and in the local assemblies. These defects are perhaps most visible on the larger scale of the former: so many are the really important reforms which everyone would like to see carried out; so extraordinarily narrow are the limits of the legislative outcome year by year; and so slack is the hand which controls the national expenditure, in spite of all the eloquence with which the nation is regaled. If we ourselves were more earnest in our citizenship, more resolutely bent upon extending downwards the quiet joys of national sobriety, industry, thrift, and social justice, we should be able to find more efficient instruments. But, as things are at present, we tolerate incapacity in public business, and the irrelevance of mere rhetoric, with far more patience and placidity than we show towards inefficiency in the methods of a company in which we happen to hold shares.

If our conclusions are correct, then it follows as a matter of course that no problem, imperial or local, has more genuinely practical importance than that of breaking down this civic indifference, which lies at the root of the incompetence of our public representatives. It is far more important than any particular reform in our laws or institutions. For if the social conscience were more generally active, and civic duties were more unconditionally imperative, reforms, wise in their conception and far-reaching in their beneficent effects, would follow almost of themselves. The community whose morals are genuinely socialized is like a strong man in mind and body, fit to meet any ordinary emergency. It has little to fear in facing the future, for the nature of things is at its back.

How, then, is this more active social spirit to be made more general? How are more good men to be brought to regard the affairs of the city and the State as if they were their own? Not by an appeal to sentiment, or by stirring the emotions—at least in the first place. The value of sentiments depends upon the convictions from which they spring. They are worthy only if their object is worthy. And if at any time our best feelings do not cluster round worthy objects, it means that we have not recognized the true nature of these objects. All genuine reformation comes from clearer vision of what is right. And this is what I implied when I said that our indifference to the social good rests on ignorance, and on the fallacies of which ignorance is both the cause and the victim. I shall mention only two of those fallacies at present, for our time together is very limited.

The first I shall call, at the risk of some misunderstanding, the fallacy of the Individualist; the second the fallacy of the Socialist. Both of these terms have many meanings, all the meanings continually change, and only the foolhardy will try to fix them in a definition. But I should try to account for the Individualist by saying that he has only an obscure vision of the dependence of the individual upon society; and the Socialist, by saying that he has only an obscure vision of the dependence of society upon *him*. The former, at the heart of him, believes he can get on pretty well without society; he wants to be let alone by it and to carry on his private affairs without its interference; and he would fain resist the extension of public enterprise, because it seems to invade the personal province. He has a very strong view of his private rights, and a less strong sense of his public duties. Indeed, his duty to society is apt to take the form of charity, which he may dispense, or not, according to the promptings of a benevolent heart.

The Socialist is not so easily described. He is apt to desire the profits of Individualism without its pains; and his mind is less clear even to himself than that of the Individualist. It ranges more widely and adventurously. But he is much impressed with the evils that individualism brings. Individual enterprise is to him the outcome of private greed, and brings competition and collision, and hard hearts and merciless methods. He would have the work of the world done, of course, and its rewards distributed. But the work must be done, and its fruits enjoyed, not so much by any one in particular, for that might bring back private enterprise, as

by every one in general. The extension of municipal and State enterprise seems good to him for the very reason that it seems evil to his opponent: it narrows the sphere of the private will, which he holds to be at bottom bad.

Neither description is kind; but neither is intended to be complete, for what we have to do with at present is their characteristic errors.

Now, it has seemed to me that the social theory of modern times promises in no way to tell more beneficially on our practice than in exposing and removing these errors. It shows the Individualist that he cannot do without society, and even that he must not seek to narrow its enterprise as if it were a bad thing in itself. It shows the Socialist that the private will, so far from needing limitation, needs expansion in the only way in which the will can be expanded—namely, by being enabled to conceive larger fields of enterprise, and made more free to carry them out. Nay, modern theory goes further—though we cannot stop to show how at present—it reveals the interesting and apparently paradoxical fact that social and individual enterprise grow together: that the communities where the individuals have the largest and freest manhood are precisely those which do most for their citizens. What a rich growth of fruitless discussion, which bursts forth with such amazing vitality whenever a city or a State projects anything new, would disappear were this truth seen and believed!

The real source of the errors on both sides is the same; or, in other words, both errors are branches which spring from the same trunk. Both the Individualist and the Socialist regard the State or civic community, and the individuals who constitute it, as more or less exclu-

sive and independent of each other. The correction of their errors comes from recognizing more fully that the State or the city and its citizens have only one life; so that each in repressing its opposite is destroying itself. In other words, the Individualist must be brought to see that his dependence on society is much more close than he deems, and the Socialist that the welfare of society depends on providing for the individual the means for the most vigorous growth of an independent personality—means which include, amongst other things, full rights of private property and full scope for private enterprise.

In this lecture I shall take up the first of these tasks. I shall try to show, not that the Individualist's sense of his own rights is too strong, nor that he values his independence too highly, but that he owes his rights, his independence, and the sphere for their exercise, to society; and that, in consequence, his obligations to society are as sacred as his obligations to himself.

There is in Plato's *Crito* a passage which brings this forth with so much clearness that I am tempted to quote it.

Socrates is in prison, awaiting the hour of his death. He is advised by his friends, who have provided the opportunity, to escape from prison rather than suffer the unjust sentence of his fellow-citizens. But the voice of the laws of the state of Athens keeps "murmuring in his ears like the sound of the flute in the ears of the mystic," and "prevents him from hearing any other."

"Tell us," say the laws, "what complaint you have to make against us which justifies you in attempting

to destroy us and the state? In the first place did we not bring you into existence? Your father married your mother by our aid and begat you. Say whether you have any objection to urge against those of us who regulate marriage?" "None," I should reply. "Or against those of us who, after birth, regulate the nurture and education of children, in which you also were trained? Were not the laws which have the charge of education right in commanding your father to train you in music and gymnastics?" "Right," I should reply. "Well, then, since you were brought into the world and nurtured and educated by us, can you deny in the first place that you are our child and slave as your fathers were before you? And if this is true you are not on equal terms with us, nor can you think that you have a right to do to us what we are doing to you. Would you have any right to strike or revile or do any other evil to your father or your master, if you had one, because you have been struck or reviled by him or received some other evil at his hands?—you would not say this? And because we think right to destroy you, do you think that you have any right to destroy us in return and your country as far as in you lies? Will you, O professor of true virtue, pretend that you are justified in this? Has a philosopher like you failed to discover that our country is more to be valued and higher and holier far than mother or father or any ancestor, and more to be regarded in the eyes of the gods and of men of understanding? also to be soothed and gently and reverently entreated when angry, even more than a father, and if not persuaded obeyed? And when we are punished by her, whether with imprisonment or stripes, the punishment is to be endured in silence;

and if she lead us to wounds or death in battle, thither we follow as is right: neither may anyone yield or retreat or leave his rank, but whether in battle or in a court of law, or in any other place, he must do what his city and his country order him, or he must change their view of what is just; and if he may do no violence to his father or his mother, much less may he do violence to his country."

"What answer shall we make to this, Crito? Do the laws speak truly or do they not?"

Crito. "I think that they do."

Soc. "Then the laws will say, 'Consider Socrates, that if we speak truly you are going to do us an injury. For, after having brought you into the world, and nurtured and educated you, and given you and every other citizen a share in every good we had to give, we further proclaim to every Athenian, that if he does not like us when he has come of age and has seen the ways of the city, he may go where he pleases, and take his goods with him; and none of us laws will interfere with him. . . . But he who has experience of the manner in which we order justice and administer the State, and still remains, has entered into an implied contract that he will do as we command him. And he who disobeys us is thrice wrong—1st, because in disobeying us he is disobeying his parents; 2nd, because we are the authors of his education; 3rd, because he has made an agreement with us that he will duly obey our commands. . . . We do not rudely impose them, but give him the alternative of obeying, or convincing us that they are unjust. That is what we offer and he does neither.' . . .

"'Listen, then, Socrates, to us, who have brought you up. Think not of life and children first and of justice after-

wards, but of justice first, that you may be justified before the princes of the world below. For neither will you nor any that belong to you be happier or holier or juster in this life, or happier in another, if you do as Crito bids. Now you depart in innocence, a sufferer and not a doer of evil, a victim not of the laws but of men. But if you go forth returning evil for evil and injury for injury, breaking the covenants and agreements you have made with us, and wronging those whom you ought least to wrong, that is to say, yourself, your friends, your country, and us, we shall be angry with you while you live, and our brethren the laws in the world below will receive you as an enemy; for they will know that you have done your best to destroy us. Listen to us then and not to Crito.'

"This is the voice which I seemed to hear murmuring in my ears like the sound of the flute in the ears of the mystic ; that voice, I say, is humming in my ears and prevents me from hearing any other. And I know that anything more which you may say will be vain. Yet speak if you have anything to say."

Crito. "I have nothing to say, Socrates."

Soc. "Leave me then to follow whithersoever God leads."

"The very existence of the State," says Plato elsewhere, "implies that virtue is not any man's private possession. . . . All of us have a mutual interest in the justice and virtue of one another. . . . He who appears to you to be the worst of those who have been brought up in laws and humanities would appear to be a just man and a master of justice if he were to be compared with men who had no education, or courts of justice or laws, or any restraints upon them which compelled them to practise virtue."

I do not deny that there is more of State compulsion in this passage from the *Crito* than is pleasing to modern ears, or is consistent with the welfare of the State itself, not to speak of that of the individual. Plato did not see, as later thinkers have seen, that the State in pouring its treasures into its citizens makes them free. Nevertheless, the dependence of the individual upon society is not exaggerated by him, nor is the reverential service that he owes to his city and his State. Indeed, I doubt if these can be exaggerated; we possess so little that we have not borrowed from them.

"But I have my individuality," you reply, "and its indefeasible rights which the city and State must in all circumstances respect." And the reply is right. The State that does not respect these, nay, the State that does not deepen the meaning of personality and enlarge the range of its rights is not safe or progressive. But what is that individuality? And whence has it come? How much is there of it that is not due to the State and its manifold institutions? Apart from the power of reaction on its environment which is implicit in all rational life, I should answer "Nothing." And even that power itself would remain undeveloped, unrealized, a meaningless and impotent possibility, were it not for the social system into which it is born, and from which at every moment of its existence it derives its maintenance. If we examine the personality on which the individualist justly sets so high a value, or the rights of which he is so conscious, we shall find that every shred and element of their content are derived from the State, in which he has been nurtured. "He grows with his world, . . . and when he can separate

himself from that world, and know himself apart from it, then by that time his self, . . . is penetrated, infected, characterized by the existence of others. Its content implies in every fibre relations of community. . . . He learns to speak, and here he appropriates the common heritage of his race, the tongue that he makes his own is his country's language, it is (or it should be) the same that others speak, and it carries into his mind the ideas and sentiments of the race . . . and stamps them in indelibly. He grows up in an atmosphere of example and general custom, his life widens out from one little world to other and higher worlds, and he apprehends through successive stations the whole in which he lives, and in which he has lived. Is he now to try and develop his 'individuality,' his self which is not the same as other selves? Where is it? What is it? The soul within him is saturated, is filled, is qualified by, it has assimilated, has got its substance, has built itself up from, it is one and the same life with the universal life. And if he turns against this he turns against himself; if he thrusts it from him, he tears his own vitals; if he attacks it, he sets his weapon against his own heart. He has found his life in the life of the whole, he lives that in himself, 'he is a pulse-beat of the whole system, and himself the whole system.'"¹

Now, what follows from all this? Manifestly, it seems to me, that the indifference of the individual to his social obligations is in no sense justifiable. His duties towards society are only comparable to the duties of the child to the mother who has carried him under her heart;

¹ Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, pp. 155, 156.

for he is born, nourished, developed into individuality within the social matrix. He owes to his city and the State a service that never grows weary, a loyalty that never fails, a love that forgets all faults, or rather, remembers them only to endeavour to remove them.

And it is in his power to pay it. The first, the greatest service he can render them, is that of fulfilling the duties of the station in life in which he is placed. For social life is articulated through and through into limited spheres of activity, suitable to the powers of its particular organs. No public activity will make up for the neglect of these more private duties. But in performing these honestly and well the individual is also serving the State. In an ideal condition of society, I am sometimes tempted to believe, no other service can be required of a man except that which his peculiar station, his profession, trade, or craft may bring. But we are far, very far, from that ideal state when everyone, being virtuous and wise, bears his own share of the burden of the general good—which is not only a burden but a privilege. In the meantime, the man who either by his wisdom or his riches, by his happy temperament, his virtuous will, his ready sympathy, his wide intellectual outlook, his social status, or by any other form of wealth within him or without, is endowed beyond his neighbours, is called upon to undertake many a task outside his narrower sphere. By enfolding himself within his immediate personal or family concerns, and wrapping himself in his more private virtues, he will deprive himself of the opportunities of stronger growth: for the wider atmosphere of the city and of the state is to that of the family as the open air is

to a closed room—colder and less kindly and sometimes rude, but also bracing. Virtue was never meant to be cloistered, my friends, and the world of human society needs all we possess of it. We have a right to call upon each other to be good citizens, and to endeavour as best we may to pay the debts of honour to the great municipality and the greater empire within which it is our privilege to lead and to spend our little lives.

LECTURE III

SOCIETY DEPENDS ON MAN

Chairman : Treasurer D. M. Stevenson. IN the last lecture we were considering one aspect of a common fallacy: the fallacy which represents the individual man and the society in which he lives as two things relatively independent of each other, having exclusive rights and separate provinces, neither of which can be extended except by invading the other.

This view rests on a metaphor. It has been adopted without examination. It has been assumed as a matter of course that human relations are like relations between physical things. It is entertained by men who are not conscious of possessing any theory of society; and it rules their practice all the more absolutely because they are not aware of it. It produces both resistance to, and the advocacy of, social changes on false issues. It prescribes no higher duty to the wisest statesman than that of compromising between extremes, both of which are bad—as if there were no principle in civic and imperial matters which is intrinsically good. He attempts to find some *via media*, to mark the boundaries which should separate Municipal or State enterprise from private enterprise. And the attempt necessarily fails, for no such line exists. Man and

society, like a plant and its environment, enter too intimately into one another to permit us to represent their functions as altogether distinct. Each needs the other in order to act at all. Their dependence is mutual and absolute, and they prosper together; for, in truth, they have but one life. Private and communal enterprise, and private and communal efficiency grow together.

From the ordinary point of view—the point of view occupied by the Individualist who opposes himself to society, and of the Socialist who opposes society to himself—this parallel growth of functions appears to be impossible or a mere theoretical paradox. But on examining the individual in the last lecture, we found that in opposing society he is really opposing himself. For he *is* his society individualized, its impersonal forces focussed. There is in him no content whatsoever, whether intellectual or moral, which he has not borrowed from it. His personality, were it analyzed, would show nothing rational that is not social. His speech, opinions, habits, beliefs, moral purposes, religious faith—deprived of which he would not remain a rational being—have been appropriated by him from the common social stock.

Not only does society enter into his personality, as does the physical environment into the physical organism, but society provides him with his station in life, with those relations to his fellows which, in the case of good men, become *duties*, that is, opportunities for realizing his intellectual and moral self. Cut off from society he has neither a rational life nor a sphere in which to exercise its powers: he is like a branch

severed from the tree, all the functions of his manhood are arrested. This much we said to the Individualist who too frequently carries in his heart, if we may believe what is always on his lips, a deeper sense of his rights against society than of the rights of society against him.

Let us now turn to the Socialist. He is the victim of the same fallacy as to the relative independence of the State and the individual, but he accentuates the other aspect of it. Not willingly, I admit. He would no more abolish the individual than the Individualist would abolish the State. He would even develop his powers, giving to many more men, to *all* men, the opportunities of realizing themselves to the uttermost. His intentions are good, his heart is in the right place ; but his head may be wrong all the same. And if his Socialism carries him towards the appropriation of the means of industry by the State, towards the abolition of private property, then he is very far wrong. For, in spite of his good intentions he would reduce the individual into a state of dependence and tutelage, where the responsibilities, and therefore the opportunities of realizing his rational and moral nature would disappear. It is not by abolishing private property, my friends, nor even by weakening the sense of its sacredness that good citizens can be created. It is by extending and deepening that sense, till men recognize that what is another's, as well as that which is their own, demands their care and protection. The distinction between *meum* and *tuum* must remain, under all social changes. If the State appropriated all things to-day it would have in reality to distribute them again to-morrow.

But as society progresses the accent that is placed on the two aspects of private property will be changed. It will fall not so much on "*Thine is mine,*" as on "*Mine is also thine.*" Progress comes not by destroying the relations between men in society, merging either them or their possessions in a common mass, but by moralizing them. The individuality of man must be kept sacred and intact as the centre of rights, and even the possessions of others must share its sacredness. For, as the individual apart from society is nothing but an empty name, so is society apart from the individual. And in what remains of this lecture I shall dwell upon this truth. It is too much forgotten by us all, Individualists and Socialists alike.

The very magnitude of the modern city, and especially of the modern state, obscures this truth from our view. In small, isolated, rudimentary societies, like the civic States of Athens or Sparta, the dependence of the state upon the individual's personal worth and active patriotism was obvious. The Athenian State was a little community surrounded by rivals, and at any moment the courage of its citizens might be required to defend it against its enemies. Their temperance, justice, wisdom, and all the virtues of peace were in constant demand to resist the forces within that made for its disintegration. The State was frail as well as small, and it was easily overturned; for it was the first experiment of mankind in associating wills that are free—which is the essence of a state.

But now all is changed. It is rarely, indeed, that the cry of a modern State, in peril for its existence, startles its citizens. In this country, not even in times of war, have

we really heard that cry. Echoes of it have reached us from other lands and other times ; but we have not ourselves witnessed the dreadful drama of a dissolving State, nor seen, as our neighbours saw across the channel, the boiling up of the great deeps of society, the confused mingling of all its forces, which reduced the wisdom of man into folly and melted his strength into water. We have found the State ever stable and strong, although we have had our times of suffering and distress. It seems to move, all too slowly perhaps, but with the peaceful security of a star, in obedience to tried laws of public welfare, towards fuller individual liberty and broader social justice. We may acknowledge that its welfare is our own, and that it is the ultimate source of all our benefits ; but "What am I to it?" we say, "Less than is the single leaf to the forest oak."

Nor is it from its magnitude and stability alone that any service we can render to it seems of so little importance. The modern State is exceedingly complex. There are within it numberless minor organizations—industrial, commercial, educational, religious—which are more or less remote from the direct interests of the State, and which claim and occupy all our powers. In the ancient civic State the services of the individual to it were as direct as they were manifold. He was *its* soldier in time of war, he was *its* priest, *its* judge, *its* legislator in times of peace. But the defence of the modern State is in other hands than those of the ordinary citizen, and so are the administration and the institution of its laws. Instead of making these laws, and laying his hand directly on the helm of the State, he has but one voice amongst many thousands in electing a representative who may himself have hardly

more to do with the making, or the refusal to make, laws than a Chinese doll whose head can be put in motion, now horizontally and now vertically. Even in a great city the part of the individual in guiding the education of the children or regulating the affairs of the public is exceedingly small. What matters it whether he performs his part or not? The city and the State do not depend on him, is the all too facile conclusion to which he is prone to come.

And, finally, the organization of interests in modern society further manifests the weakness and reduces the significance of the individual. The old individual relations between men in different grades of society and in different occupations are giving way to class relations. Knowing that he is too feeble to hold his own amongst forces whose influence travels far and wide through the modern economic world, worker joins with worker, master with master, merchant with merchant. The interests of individuals similarly placed in society are massed together, and the shocks of their collision travel through the whole community like a blind earthquake. What is the individual amongst such forces? Is it not vain for him to profess a larger loyalty than that which he owes to his class, or to pretend to care for the State as a whole which somehow combines, if it does not harmonize, these warring elements?

Look where we will we find the individual in the presence of powers he cannot control, any more than the little boat can sway the waves of the swinging ocean. And the natural tendency of man's sense of his insignificance is to paralyse his will and arrest his service. This is *one* reason, at any rate, why men

who have the good sense to take a tolerably true measure of themselves are tempted to retreat from the turmoil of public affairs and, like Voltaire's *Candide*, to "cultivate their gardens."

But this attitude also rests on a fallacy. Stable and vast as is the modern State, powerful and complex as are the forces which collide and combine within it, they do not constitute a *natural* system. There are laws of society—laws of its economic failure or prosperity, laws of its political or moral growth and decay, laws as sure as those which guide the stars. But they are not *natural* laws. The State owns no quality, its laws no meaning or power, except that which is derived from and maintained by the will, the emotions, the intelligence of individuals. It cannot exist for a moment except within this rational medium.

We have spoken of the State as a most rich inheritance, the accumulated gain of the practical wisdom of many ages of men who have shed their lives like forest leaves to make the soil on which the good customs and institutions of modern society grow. No one can measure the worth of the civilized State, many as are the defects and deep as are the wrongs that still find harbour within it. No effort of reason can set forth, one by one, the elements of social good that intervene between the individual born in such a State and the unimaginable limitations of a life of savagery.

Nevertheless, there is not one item of all these elements which can become his own, except in so far as by the exercise of his own intelligence and will he gains them for himself. Man is not a passive recipient of any spiritual gift. We cannot inherit nor bequeath

virtues, much as we might often desire to do so, either as children of parents better than ourselves, or as parents of children whose steps we fail to guide. A man's moral and intellectual possessions are the conquests of his own sword. All the spiritual wealth of the world—its learning, its enterprise, its growing purposes—will pass him by, leaving him utterly poor in soul, unless he arrests it and personifies it anew in his own attainments. Society persists only by constant reproduction. It has no more stable basis than the appearing and disappearing wills of men. Not for one day will it "go of itself." There can be no suspension of moral and intellectual functions in the State without bringing death, any more than there can be in a living body.

If we examine this truth in the sphere of any private enterprise it becomes plain. How long do you say can a great business concern last if, upon its Board of Directors or amongst its workmen, you substitute folly for good sense, laziness for industry, extravagance for thrift, carelessness and disorder for caution and method, dishonesty and faithlessness in contracts for honour and rectitude? A great business ordinarily takes many years to grow, and every element in its growth is the product of the constant exercise of business virtues. In slowness of growth it is like a tree, or a good character; and like these, too, it may be cut down, almost in one day.

Now, what is true of a private business is also true of the city and the State. The truth is less obvious in their case precisely because the interests involved are greater, and enter more constantly and more deeply into our daily lives. We do not recognize our privileges

nor the responsibilities they bring any more than we feel the weight of the atmosphere: their pressure is constant, and we *live* amongst them. Nevertheless, the responsibilities are present, and must be constantly fulfilled, if the State and the city are to remain secure. One ill-considered act of doubtful probity on the part of a Town Council may shake public faith to its foundations and indefinitely lower its powers for good for a long time to come. All the great assets, which entitle our governors to rule and make us their willing subjects, are easily squandered. It looks at times as if the dignity and honour of the Town Council were at the mercy of the crudest of its members; so directly do they depend on the combined good taste and good sense of all concerned. It is so much more easy to destroy public confidence than to produce or restore it. We cannot afford to have *one* Town Councillor whose tastes are low or whose ways are devious—except at a public loss difficult to measure. We cannot permit him even to substitute for personal selfishness the selfishness of a class, and become the tool of an “Interest” or the mouthpiece of a “Trade” without danger to the community. Indeed, one of the things I like least in our city life, and which gives me most misgivings, is that the interests of a single trade should, to so great an extent, decide our choice of rulers.

But what we have said of the governors we may repeat of those who elect them. Here, too, the stability of the city and the State depends on the active loyalty of their best citizens. I could imagine, I am not sure that at one time I did not actually witness, an eruption upwards into the light of the worst elements of our city life:

an unseemly combination of the bitter prejudices and of the sordid motives of reckless men who cared little for the good name of the city, with the ignorance, intemperance, selfishness of the worst inhabitants of the slums. What thoughtful man could help feeling at such a time how thin was the social crust on which our civic life rested with the false security of irreflexion? And when I look abroad at our vast empire and consider what consequences would follow if the ignorant masses—ignorant, I mean, of the practice of the private virtues and of the duties of citizenship—were once to realize their power and combine, I cannot but feel how directly the welfare of the State depends upon its good men.

This is not the place to address our working men; and even if it were, I should not by a single word imply that they are less careful of their own character or of that of the State than others. But I should say to them, that the Empire is now in the hollow of their hands. They can bring it down in ruin, or they can guide it to still greater issues. But whether they will do the former or the latter, depends upon the enlightened and unselfish patriotism of every man amongst them. And their responsibility recoils upon those who have been favoured with better opportunities of learning the worth of citizenship and of doing what is right to the State. The State is not safe unless public opinion is enlightened opinion; and the task of converting public opinion into educated opinion is so vast as to require the best powers of us all.

There is no doubt that the individual depends upon the State, there is just as little doubt that the State

depends upon the individual. Our debts to the city and the State are measured by our obligations, and they are immeasurable; and it will not be well with either city or State if these debts are not, always in our eyes, *debts of honour to be punctually and fully paid.*

LECTURE IV

SERVICES THAT SOCIETY NEEDS

*Chairman :
Ex-Coun-
cillor
William
Martin.*

IF there is any man more pitiable in himself or more contemptible in the eyes of his fellows than another, he is the man who from amidst prosperous circumstances can look at his benefactor in dire need, without endeavouring to relieve him. Ingratitude is one of the most monstrous of the vices that disfigure humanity.

Well, gentlemen, I have been speaking in these lectures of a benefactor to whom we owe a great deal—much more than we can measure. Plato, as we saw, thought that man owes more to the State than to father and mother: and I am not sure that he was wrong. What in your life do you value most? That you have been born of good parents, brought up on a virtuous hearth, educated in a good school and college, so as to meet the duties and opportunities of life with a clear mind and a strong will? That you have been provided with a sphere in life where you can exercise the powers of your manhood in performing your duties? That you have acquired wealth, or influence, or learning, or brought up children on your own hearth to inherit your means and to continue the good life? Then, without exaggeration of feeling or ornament of rhetoric, I may say that the city

and the State in which you have found yourself have been your partners in them all. All these things, the best of life's endowments, are a joint product. You owe them to yourself ; you owe them also to the social life that throbs within you. Society supplies nothing but opportunities ; but it supplies them all. You may use them or you may abuse them, but you can neither do, nor have, nor be anything without its constant fostering—constant as that of the air you breathe, and just as essential to your life. Here, then, is a benefactor indeed.

And, as I tried to show in my last lecture, it is a benefactor which needs your help. The State is simply the product of man's rational effort, sustained only by the continued well-doing of its members. No man anywhere does a private wrong, or omits to do a private right thing but that society suffers. No man does well but the State gains. The powers of the State, or city, its capacity for conceiving and carrying out good purposes, rise or fall with the virtues of its members, as the water in the streams rises with the rains and falls in times of drought. We sometimes enquire as to the limits of the activity of a State or city : it is an idle question. These depend on the intelligence and integrity of its members. A corrupt or ignorant city can do little ; it is better that its powers should be kept low : an enlightened and just community can do much, increasing the happiness and the useful functions of its citizens at every stage of its own advance. Always in city or State the measure of its power is that of the wisdom and uprightness of its citizens.

It is not possible to reflect upon these matters, or to penetrate even a little behind superficial appearances

without concluding that the city and the State both deserve our services and need them.

"What services, then, can we render?" you may be inclined to ask.

The real answer lies in your own circumstances, your vocation, and your character. In no two cases is the answer precisely the same, and no man can find it for another. Besides, the man who dictates his duty to his neighbour offers him an indignity and is himself presumptuous. Duty binds only those who discover it and impose it on themselves. The doing it is a privilege confined to the free. If a man's social conscience is awake, more duties press upon him than he can perform, more good causes call for his succour than he can support.

But we have been assuming (have we not?) that there are men, and even good men, who have not reflected much on these matters, and whose sense of their social responsibilities has been asleep. Good causes call for their help and they do not hear. The hospitals would be closed, the hands of charity would be empty, the education of the children would stop, the city would starve, all the generous enterprises of civilization would be arrested if the rates and taxes were converted into free will offerings, and no one offered anything but these men. They verily know not what they do in being indifferent to such great causes.

But even they really want guidance only in one matter. Let them value society more highly, and all manner of good results would follow.

They would never use society as mere means, but always as an end. They would respect its rights, they

would protect its honour, they would guide its enterprise, they would ennoble and strengthen its purposes. But, instead of all this, what is it we too often see? You have been present at meetings where candidates for civic or imperial responsibilities have sought the public confidence; you have heard them "heckled," you have perhaps observed the questions asked of them. Have you ever heard Capital press upon the candidate the rights of Labour? Have you seen Labour anxious for the rights of Capital? Not as a rule, I venture to say. "The so-called 'rights' of capital are all too well sustained," says Labour. "Labour is sufficiently clamorous already," says Capital. And both speak true, at least in this respect, that each side has only an obscure and faint vision of the interests of the State as a whole, and sees clearly only its own. I have been ashamed in this city to hear the wealthy cry against taxation irrespective of what taxation brings, and the poor cry for civic gifts irrespective of what they cost.

But if you would observe this spirit at its worst, where it exposes its degradation most shamelessly, you would find it where the amalgamated interests of a class of men are so powerful as to threaten the capture of the State. You will find it active wherever the State or city has privileges to grant or to refuse. This is one of the evils which, as even its advocates would admit, "Protection" has to encounter, and to set in the balance against any benefits it may be supposed to bring. But you will find it also in countries where trade is free. Does the working man, through his labour representative in City Council or Parliament, place his own interests first? Then, he repeats the errors of

the privileged classes of the past, and makes social wrongs reverberate further down the ages. Let him rather send to City and Parliament men who care first for the city and the State, and justice will come the sooner. Does the trade in drink combine its vast powers and direct them on the choice of public representatives in the City Council or Imperial Parliament so as to possess instruments of its own purposes, tools for its own ends? Is it true that there can be, or even actually was inscribed on their banner, "Our Trade our Politics"? Then I call it an immoral motto, and say that those who profess and act upon it are enemies of the public good.

It is no answer to say that the extravagant assertion of their 'rights' is but a reply to the extravagant denial of them by others, even although the answer is not void of all truth. Nor is it an answer to say that where every class presses for its own claims, justice will arrive to all as the result of their collision. It is not true. The just equipoise of rights never comes in this way. Mere class legislation is never right. The State can provide for a class, or protect its interests, only when by doing so it is providing for and protecting its own good. What will arrive by such methods is care for the strong and neglect of the weak, the conversion of the State into a warring arena, and the ultimate triumph of the strong. It is not the strife of interests that maintains the equipoise of the State or city, but its just men.

If the ordinary citizen wants work to do for society he will find employment in combating this spirit, and exhibiting in his speech and conduct a nobler

view of the State and of the ends it is meant to serve.

But he will obtain a closer and clearer view of his duties if he listens to his own criticisms of the city or of the State. For it is a characteristic of the imperfectly socialized nature and of our stunted moral life that it sees the defects and duties of others more clearly than its own.

Let us, then, listen for a moment to the criticisms of the grumbler and the social pessimist.

Is he well to do? Has he been born in the soft and dangerously enervating lap of wealth, or social privilege? Then he will tell us that the greatest danger to the State comes from the growing power of "the masses."

Is he poor? Does he find the struggle for a livelihood severe? Has society been a mother to others and only a step-mother to him, slow and niggard to reward his toil, swift to bring penalties upon him for faults that are not always his own? Does not she refuse him the opportunity to win his bread, just as it suits herself; and when in age or sickness he can win it no longer, provide for his grey head and his bent form no better shelter than the workhouse? "Then,"—he concludes, not without emphasis—"then must her ways be overturned, and a new social structure set up on other foundations—where there shall be capitalists no more, nor competition and poverty any more, and where no one can say, 'That is not thine, but mine.'"

Now, what answer shall be given to these men? To the first I would reply that I believe his diagnosis of the tendencies of the times to be accurate on the whole. The working-man's assertion of his rights is verily

growing stronger ; his power over city and State is on the increase. He is gradually learning to combine with his fellows, and a dim sense of his latent might is slowly broadening within him. And already his power is divined by others ; for demagogues pander to him, agitators excite him, and politicians bow their knees to him. What, then, is the duty of those who witness and fear this new phenomenon, and whose fears, I admit, are by no means idle ?

The answer is not difficult. See to it that you do not leave "the masses," as you call them, in the hands of the most dangerous agitator of all—namely, their own wrongs.

I know that "the masses" are ignorant, and that they often blame society for evils which arise from their own wasteful ways. But when they have just complaints against no one except themselves, you have little to fear from them. Men in the wrong have usually little force. Never at any stage of society or in any country,—not in Russia to-day nor in France when Revolution came—has the agitator much power to move the masses, unless he has been nursed on the milk of their wrongs.

But perhaps our individualistic critic cannot admit this, and maintains that the discontent of the masses and their growing aggression has no other cause than their own ignorance and their own bad will. Then it is another duty which sits at his door, and calls for him to a wiser *rôle* and a better even for himself than that of merely grumbling at his times. If he would save the State from the dangers he foresees, let him show the masses that their wrongs are fanciful

and their social nostrums false. I do not doubt for a moment who our ruler is about to be in State and city. It is "public opinion." The organization of modern society makes it easy to spread opinion and to mass the motives of men. There is no place now where authority can sit in sheltered quiet. The politician flies his kites to ascertain how the winds are blowing, for he dare not launch his projects "if the winds are adverse." If, as a candidate for City Council or Imperial Parliament, he seeks votes, he also seeks to ascertain the desires of his audience, promises to fulfil them with alacrity if he can, and, if he cannot, he becomes nebulous or sophistical. The occasions are far too rare when the candidate for power in the city or the State will set himself, through foul weather and through fair, to *form* the public opinion that he fears? Are our statesmen not followers of it rather than its leaders?

Well if this be the case, let our critic see to it that, so far as in him lies, the public opinion which we are doomed to follow shall be an enlightened opinion. But of all the matters that concern our general welfare there are none so neglected in school or college as those of our civic life. The youths in our Universities are taught Latin and Greek, some of them learn something of beast and bird and flower, of chemical agents and physical forces, and even of the laws of wealth, and of literature and history. It is right, nay, it is imperative, that they should know these things, and know them better. The battle between the nations is to be fought more and more in the fields of the intelligence; and men must be fitted for their special professions if the State is to prosper. But who explains to students the

structure of the State? How are they to learn the laws on which our own social welfare rests? Who reveals to them the intricacy of the elements which compose the modern State and the delicacy of its machinery? How shall they judge between projects of reform which are wise and plans which are foolish? Where, above all, can they learn reverence for the State, or get some glimpse of the nature of the rights and duties of citizenship? Only through the heated debates and passionate utterances of struggling politicians, and in the hurried pages of a daily press, the one and the other of which are committed to foregone party conclusions.

I am not forgetting that the good sense of the Town Council of Glasgow and the generosity of some of its citizens have led them, in our own University, to endow in part one lectureship, whose emoluments are not much less than those of a man-cook or a head butler. Something can be accomplished even with these small means. A beginning can be made to deal with social phenomena in the serene, passionless spirit, and with the impersonal devotion and severity and purity of method which we apply to the investigation of natural objects.

But I look forward to the time when Glasgow, nay, when the country as a whole, shall do much more to raise the level of knowledge of the nature of the State and of the laws of its true advance. You will yet purify the wells of citizenship by enlightening the minds of the citizens. You will first teach your teachers. And I venture to say that the time will come when there shall be no college or secondary school in the land where something is not done, amongst the rudi-

ments of many subjects, to give to the future citizen a glimpse of the vast powers that move in our social life and of the nobleness of its service.

Or has the critic who fears the growing power of the masses any wiser strategy to recommend? For my part I do not believe there is any short cut to this great end of educating the "public opinion," which will rule us whether we shall educate it or not. It is a long way round; but the longest way round in some matters is the shortest way home.

Here, then, perhaps, is a service to society which some of you may, directly or indirectly, desire to perform.

But I must turn for a moment before I close to our other critic, who is, as a rule, at the other end of the social scale and advocates methods of revolution.

To him I would say, as I have already hinted in a single sentence, that his one hope lies, not in overturning the relations that bind man to man in society, but in moralizing them. His own method is more easy, I admit: it is almost always more easy to overturn than to improve. But after the overturn comes the restoration, and restoration, as a rule, very much on old lines. The main relations that now divide man from man, giving to each his own station and rights and duties, are essential to society. If they are destroyed they must be restored, for society cannot exist without them. But they may be moralized. I sometimes believe that it is the one paramount enterprise of society to moralize its institutions, and that it will find no rest till it achieves this task. And by this I mean that the ordinary, daily connexions in which

man is bound to man in his business, in public works, in offices, in the avocations as masters or men, as capitalists or labourers, the pursuit of which constitutes the very substance of their lives, must be such as to develop, and not to crush or corrupt, the manhood that is in them.

Benevolence descending upon the needy from above has its value. It is good, at least for the West End, that it should wrap its skirts more closely around it and occasionally visit the slums of the East. Tax the land, if that is just, provide houses for the homeless, and pensions for needy age, if you are sure that by these means you do not defeat your ends. But neither voluntary gifts nor compulsory legislation can reach the social evils if the stable relations amongst which we make our bread are not made into opportunities of a good life. Capital must discover that it has duties. Labour, my friends, must be ennobled. Its conditions must be changed so that it may *make* men and not destroy them.

The workshop must become a school of virtue, as most of the old workshops were and as the professions are now. More masters must care for their men as they care for their machines. They must seek inventions that shall induce industry, honesty, thrift, manliness amongst their workers, even as they seek for cheaper and better material for their industry or better methods of dealing with it.

But, on the other hand, what the masters can do for the men is restricted or enlarged, it is limited, defined by what the men are willing to do for themselves. The enterprise of raising the moral level of these substantial relations

amongst which we spend our lives, is a task that demands the co-operation of both sides. The men themselves must become jealous of the good name of their class, and recognize in every thriftless, intemperate, irregular, dishonest workman the enemy of their good.

I am quite certain that the care of the master for the man and of the man for the master is a sound principle in economics: I cannot doubt that it is also sound social doctrine. Social relations are meant to be moral relations. I believe it is inscribed in the very structure both of man and society that they shall find no rest except in the right, and find no true joy or happiness except in the pursuit of it.

